

Klass act ends a day of celebration



Picture by Nick Linford

From left: host Myleene Klass, winner of the Outstanding Achiever Award Helen Wynne and Chris Jones, chief executive of City & Guilds, at the City & Guilds Lion Awards, in London. See page 11

Monday, June 10, 2013
www.feweek.co.uk

Stewart Segal interview



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Late funding rates 'unacceptable'

Chris Henwood
@Chris_Henwood

Skills Funding Agency announces transition factors hitting provider rates by 25 per cent or more

Colleges and training providers have been told their Skills Funding Agency earnings rate could fall by a quarter or more, with just two months before the new academic year.

The agency is introducing protection measures for colleges and training providers, to "smooth" the impact of its new funding system.

The measures are intended to stop providers' earnings rocketing or nosediving.

Jerry White, director of planning and performance at City College Norwich, said: "It is going to be vexing curriculum planners up and down the country to be told, with only

around 30 working days to go until the beginning of the new contract year, that funding values need adjustment resulting in the need to change delivery and resource plans."

The agency said decisions on next year's funding were still open to review.

Each provider has been given a number — a 'transition factor' — that indicates how much of the budget under the new system it can keep.

A provider transition factor of 0.9 would mean its national rates are reduced by 10 per cent, so it would need to do more work for the same money.

Allocations, finalised at the end of March, remain unaffected by the

'transition factor'.

Worries about providers learning how they would be affected by the protection measures were aired in a Joint Information Systems Committee online forum for college finance directors, where one provider revealed its rates under the new system would be cut by 25 per cent.

"I can't imagine that colleges are going to take this lying down," said one forum member.

FE Week has also learned that at least one independent training provider has been given a transition factor below 0.7.

Meanwhile, a number of colleges have already approached the Association

of Colleges with concerns about their situations.

Julian Gravatt, the association's assistant chief executive, told FE Week: "In principle, it's right for the agency to smooth the introduction of the new formula, but it's unacceptable that some colleges have only just received this information at a time when they are setting their 2013-14 budgets.

"We are busy taking up college queries with agency staff."

An agency spokesperson said: "We have worked with the sector over the past 18 months to develop and implement a more streamlined funding system.

"We are helping providers move to the more streamlined system including using a transition factor which will ensure that their total cash earnings remain within three per cent of the current system.

"The transition factor is derived from the latest full year data from 2011/12 to generate an adjustment which maybe positive or negative to earnings of a provider. It has not been designed to be applied at the level of each qualification for planning provision.

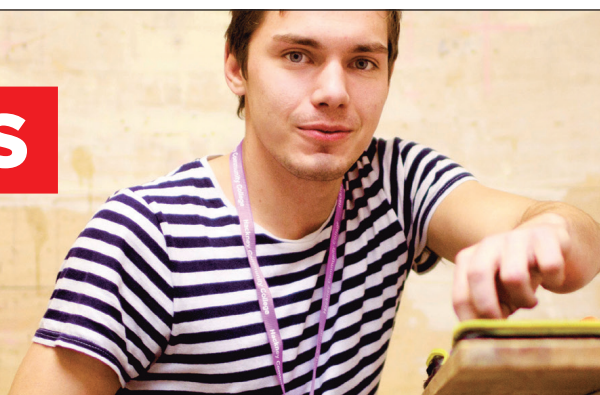
"In circumstances where provision has changed dramatically from 2011/12 to 2013/14 we will review each provider's transition factor to ensure that high quality provision to learners and employers can continue."

See editorial on page 4

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Edition 68

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Top #VQDay tweets:

@ukEdge

Once again, a huge thanks to everyone who supported #VQDay, really inspiring stories and lots of fun across the country. Superb.

@norwichcollege

Employers and learners honoured on #VQDay — well done to all of our award winners and nominees!

@MidKentCollege

We've been running 'have a go' sessions in Plumbing and Electrical Installation as part of #VQDay! A huge success!

@theskillspeople

Our #VQDay was a great success with everyone coming together to celebrate and show their progression of skills so far

@WCT_official

We are celebrating #VQDay! Our Hospitality students are serving up a 3 course meal to 60 hungry year 1 children!

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Ofsted critical of foundation learning

Chris Henwood

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An Ofsted investigation into foundation learning has pointed towards a host of problems with the scheme just weeks before the replacement 16 to 19 study programmes are introduced. The education watchdog uncovered “poor” attendance and “little or no” work placement, along with “low” progression rates.

Its report, Lessons from the Foundation Learning Provision for the new 16 to 19 Study Programmes, also said the scheme’s “overall judgment profile . . . was lower than that for e2e [Entry to Employment]”, which it replaced in August 2010.

The report added: “Progression rates into full-time education or training, an apprenticeship or employment for the total numbers of leavers in the sample for 2010/11 and 2011/12 were low at an average of 50 per cent and 49 per cent, respectively.”

Matthew Coffey, Ofsted’s director of learning and skills, said: “It is important for the government and the sector to learn lessons from previous programmes highlighted in this report, which will aid the development of the 16 to 19 study programmes.”

The 13-page report further highlighted “insufficient integration of functional skills” as among the “weaker aspects” of foundation learning, which was designed to help 14 to 18-year-olds work towards to level two qualifications.

There was also “insufficient impartial advice and guidance on progression routes”.

Mr Coffey said the number of learners going

on into full-time education or training, an apprenticeship or employment had been too low. “To break this pattern, providers must make use of best practice in understanding why some providers are succeeding where others fall short,” he said.

The 16 to 19 study programmes, which will include traineeships and A-levels, are expected to be in place from August to replace foundation learning, which ends next month.

Professor Alison Wolf’s government-commissioned Review of Vocational Education found nearly 1,300 qualifications in the foundation learning “catalogue”, many of which were “very small”.

She said: “Employers value either a few familiar qualifications or ‘real’ experience.”

A Department for Education spokesperson said: “Alison Wolf was highly critical of foundation learning provision . . . because students end up taking numerous low-level qualifications that do not help them progress.

“That is why we are ending provision next month and establishing new study programmes from September.

She added: “We are also publishing new data to record the destinations of students the year after the end of key stage four and after taking A-levels or other level three qualifications.”

However, the Ofsted report — published on Friday, May 31 — also contained plaudits for foundation learning.

The education watchdog had looked at evidence from 59 providers — not including colleges — delivering the scheme to 16 to 18-year-olds and said it had resulted in “a very large number of learners improving their personal and social skills”.

FE Week news in brief

Labour college plans

Labour is looking at plans to set up a network of National Colleges of Excellence.

A party spokesperson said they would be the FE equivalent of Oxbridge and other Russell Group universities.

Shadow Education Secretary Stephen Twigg said: “We have some of the best universities in the world, it is high time that we had some of the best vocational colleges in the world too.”

Get on your boat

The finalists in the National Apprenticeship Service’s gruelling annual Brathay Challenge, where teams battle it on canoes, whaling boats and high ropes, have been announced.

The eight teams to have made it through are from Plymouth City Council, East Midlands Housing Group, Innovia Films, Unilever, Inspiria, Cobham, BCTS and Norse Group.

The challenge is due to take place on Tuesday and Wednesday in the Lake District.

FE Week reporter Eleanor Radford will be taking part in the challenge. See how she got on in next week’s edition.

SFA webinars

A series of traineeships webinars have been organised by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and the Education Funding Agency.

The one-hour sessions will cover policy and funding and include Q&As. A frequently asked questions document is planned for after the webinars. Sessions have been pencilled in for 10.15am, 11.45am and 2pm on both Thursday, June 20, and the following day.

See issue 161 of the SFA Update, available on its website. Email FundingSystemsTeam@skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk for more details.

Careers council calls for ‘culture change’

Chris Henwood

@Chris_Henwood

Traineeships and the new 16 to 19 study programmes should include impartial jobs advice as part of a “much-needed culture change” in careers guidance, according to a new report.

The “practical step” is one of a number suggested in the first report of the National Careers Council (NCS).

Other recommendations in An Aspirational Nation: Creating a culture change in careers provision include the council significantly expanding its work with schools, young people and parents — including more face-to-face guidance.

“A culture change is needed in careers provision for young people and adults to address the mismatch of skills shortages and high unemployment,” said the report, launched last Wednesday.

Further recommendations include the creation of an employer-led NCS advisory board; encouragement for bosses to volunteer staff to give job presentations at schools and colleges; and a new scheme aimed at promoting character and resilience in a successful working life. The NCS should also extend its online

National Careers Council report launch in London. From left: learner Sarah Safa, Dr Deirdre Hughes OBE and Skills Minister Matthew Hancock with learners Vandrica Wilson and Grace Henry
Picture by Shane Mann

services, according to the report, with the government “playing its role in supporting this movement and ensuring these recommendations and the practical steps in this report are implemented”.

Dr Deirdre Hughes OBE, chair of the council, said: “It falls to the careers sector to make sure that both young people and adults get the help they need.

“Our report sets out seven recommendations, accompanied by proposed practical steps. We urge the government to consider our recommendations and act on them.

“If this is done, together we can create a movement to bring about a much needed

culture change in careers provision for young people and adults.”

The report of the council, set up by the government in May last year, further called for face-to-face careers guidance to be available to all pupils from the age of 12 (Year 8); and for all students to have a planned progression route after leaving school.

Brian Lightman, general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said: “We know that good careers advice reduces the potential for students to become NEET, raises aspiration and motivation, and reduces drop out and course switching.”

He added: “A national telephone helpline

Older apprentices taking 16 to 18-year-old places

Eleanor Radford

@EleanorRadford

The 16 to 18 apprenticeships budget has been cut by £166m as would-be apprentices were squeezed out of places by “competition” from older applicants, a senior Department for Education (DfE) civil servant has revealed.

Simon Judge, the DfE’s finance and commercial director, wrote to the Education Select Committee after its expected funding of 16 to 18 apprenticeships in the current financial year fell nearly 20 per cent to £684.3m.

He said the removal of poor quality provision explained some of the underspend, but increased competition from applicants aged 19-plus, funded by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, was also a factor.

“The removal of poor quality [apprenticeship] provision is only one element of the overall underspend,” wrote Mr Judge in a letter dated May 8 to committee clerk Lynn Gardner.

He said changes in the apprenticeship mix by sector, and the wider economic conditions facing businesses in some regions and sectors, also explained the fall.

The financial revision was disclosed in the DfE’s supplementary 2012-13 estimate.

In the most recent Statistical First Release, published in March, the number of under 19 apprenticeships started in the first half of this year was provisionally 69,600 — a 12 per cent drop on last year’s provisional figure of 79,100.

By contrast, the 19-24 apprenticeship starts over the same period grew 6.5 per cent.

Exams watchdog launches fee probe

Rebecca Cooney

@RebeccaKCooney

Ofqual is investigating exam spending by colleges after its annual report found payments by schools had more than doubled in ten years, from £154m in 2002/3 to £328m in 2010/11.

Between 2006/7 and 2010/11 the number of different qualifications available schools and colleges also rose by almost 10,000, from 8,150 to 18,100 (see graph).

Much of the increase is accounted for by the introduction of the Qualifications and Credit Framework, which by 2010/11 included 9,700 qualifications.

An Ofqual spokesperson said: “We want to find out what has caused spending to increase in recent years, and find out if improvements in the way exams are bought might result in schools and colleges saving money.”

Opinion Leader Research Ltd has been commissioned by Ofqual to carry out the research.

The firm will be contacting more than 500 schools and colleges in England and Northern Ireland to conduct 20-minute telephone interviews with senior staff.

Two different surveys are being drafted — one for staff responsible for recording and monitoring exam spending such as college

Number of regulated qualifications available to certificate

Year	Number of regulated qualifications available to certificate
2006/07	8,150
2007/08	9,700
2008/09	11,250
2009/10	12,800
2010/11	14,350

Source Ofqual, Annual Qualifications Market Report 2012, p34

finance directors, and one for staff who choose which qualifications to buy in, such as curriculum managers.

The announcement of Ofqual’s exam spending survey, which will also look at schools, was welcomed by the 157 Group.

Its executive director, Lynne Sedgmore, said: “We welcome an open and transparent review to really help understand the costs, benefits and more generally assess value for money.”

Ofqual’s annual market report for 2012, which considered schools spending, suggested four possible reasons for the increases, including more qualifications being taken and a shift in demand towards qualifications which have

higher fees. “In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of ‘other’ [neither GCE nor GCSE exams] qualifications taken in schools and some of these have higher fees,” it said. Ofqual also told FE Week that it was possible there had been an increase in the number of additional fees being charged, such as late fees or resit fees.

An Ofqual spokesperson said: “We do not know the extent to which each of these factors is responsible.”

The examinations watchdog said it would encourage any colleges who were contacted to participate.

Tribal’s online resources roadshow

Wednesday 26 June, from 12pm until 4pm

Join our free, half-day event at Nescot College, promoting the use of high-quality, e-learning resources to support flexible and cost-effective delivery.

Tribal’s new range of innovative e-learning programmes cover a range of vocational areas, many of which are accredited as national qualifications. You can take advantage of accessing these via Tribal’s VLE, Trained4Work, where a fully integrated back-office system provides tracking and reporting of learner progress.

The event will feature presentations led by Tribal experts. In addition, Nick Linford, Managing Director of Lsect and Managing Editor of FE Week, will provide a valuable funding update.

To reserve your place at the event, please contact Katie McLaren by email at katie.mclaren@tribalgroup.com or call 01904 550130, quoting ‘FE Week – June roadshow’.

Editor’s comment

The transition factor

The Skills Funding Agency has been helping providers understand its funding reforms since first publishing plans in October 2011.

It has also designed the reforms in partnership with an advisory group made up of provider representatives.

But, as with all funding reforms that have come before, there will be winners and losers.

At the end of March the agency said it would “smooth” out the winning and losing with transitional protection.

Now we learn the extent of smoothing required for some providers — and it’s huge.

Imagine signing off your curriculum plans and then learning a 0.7 transition factor will be applied.

Effectively, this means to earn a £10m allocation you would have to plan £13m-worth of provision, and at a rate of 70p in the pound.

It will also be interesting to see how subcontractors react.

Presumably they will be seeking out prime providers with a transition factors above one, as they will now be earning more than the national rate.

All avoidable of course, had the funding system reform been resisted.

Nick Linford, editor

Correction

Obviously, we go to great lengths to make sure we get everybody’s job title correct in stories and in picture captions.

From caretakers to principals; from Skills Funding Agency directors to learners — everybody deserves to see their details relayed flawlessly.

So the fact that someone might undergo regular, intensive physical training; might be at the peak of their considerable strengths, is no more reason to make sure we get things right.

Bearing this in mind, our apologies to Army chef Herbert Goredema who appeared in a picture caption on page 9 of last week’s paper where he was described as a ‘Chief’.

And on the page previous, Julie Meyer’s pictured caption had her down as ‘Juli’. Sorry.

Have you spotted something wrong with this edition of FE Week?

If so, feel free to tell us about it, including the page number and story headline, and explain what the problem is. Email us at news@feweek.co.uk with Corrections in the subject line.



Grade threes get traineeship go ahead

Chris Henwood

@Chris_Henwood

Further education leaders have called for a rethink on traineeships after new rules revealed lower-rated providers would be able to run the scheme, despite it having been designed for top-ranking providers.

Skills Minister Matthew Hancock announced the traineeships framework last month, including details of how only providers graded by Ofsted as outstanding or good (grade one or two, respectively) could run them.

But according to Skills Funding Agency (SFA) rules published more recently, subcontractors deemed by Ofsted to be in need of improvement (grade three), or who have never been inspected, also will be able to run the scheme.

The issue has reopened the debate around Ofsted grades being the only means of determining suitable providers.

Lynne Sedgmore, executive director of the 157 Group, has previously described the system as “providing only a limited

perspective as it does not reflect the full range and nuances of the varied grades, differences and aspects of college provision”.

She said she wanted to see the latest issue addressed.

“Our concern at the use of Ofsted criteria alone to determine the delivery of traineeships is on record,” said Mrs Sedgmore.

“Even more worrying would be for those criteria to be inconsistently applied.

“If the anomaly highlighted is an oversight, it should be rectified, to enable the focus to be on the bigger issue of how a college’s impact can be properly measured.”

Grade three subcontractors can deliver traineeships as long as they were on the SFA’s subcontractors’ register at the start of this month. Their lead contractors must be grade one or two.

Unregistered grade three subcontractors, or those registered after May, will not be able to run the scheme. No grade four providers, or those with a notice of concern, can deliver traineeships.

Stewart Segal, chief executive designate of the Association of Employment and

Learning Providers, said: “We want to ensure that the rules for Education Funding Agency and SFA contractors are consistent.

“With a huge cohort to tackle and a limited overall budget, it’s important that we resolve this matter before the programme starts, rather than wait for case-by-case judgments.”

An SFA spokesperson said providers with an Ofsted grade of good or outstanding could use their existing supply chain to deliver a “high quality offer” to learners and employers.

“We will review provider eligibility on a regular basis to reflect any changes in Ofsted ratings,” she said.

A Department for Education spokesperson said: “For the first year of the programme, grade three prime contractors will not be able to run traineeships and any newly-registered subcontractors will need to be rated as good or outstanding by Ofsted.

“We are only allowing grade three subcontractors to deliver traineeships where they are subcontracted to a good or outstanding prime contractor and we are confident they will be able to deliver a quality service.”

Comment

Apprenticeship applications up 32 per cent

I will only get excited when the word ‘applications’ translates to new 16-18 year old apprentices starting. The types of apprenticeships attracting the most applications are also generally not the types of apprenticeships that involve high levels of real training, learning and skills development that will move this country on. Let’s get excited when the figures come out for more young engineers, construction apprentices and chefs who continue on to take higher apprenticeships and demonstrate to the young people starting secondary school and employers that apprenticeships are a worthwhile educational route.

Phil Hatton

FE loans in first month ‘low’

I think FE Week is to be congratulated for keeping the debate going. My personal opinion is that government does not want to over stimulate the market with a national campaign as there is limited resource available. Sector agencies as well as providers should do everything they can to promote loans and providers have been given cash to do this. It would be good to have a report on what they are doing with this funding. Loans present a great opportunity for colleges in particular, but all large organisations too, to review what they are doing, how they communicate to learners, employers and local communities. It is easy to blame government.

Mark Ravenhall

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Or, you can write to us at FE Week, 161-165 Greenwich High Road, London SE10 8JA.

Full contact details should be provided and can be withheld by FE Week upon request.

FE Week profile

Stewart Segal ~ his story

Eleanor Radford

@EleanorRadford

The incoming AELP chief executive talks to FE Week

Stewart Segal has always been interested in knowing what makes people tick.

It’s why the incoming chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) took on a human resources graduate training scheme at Ford after studying geography at university.

And it’s why the 56-year-old father-of-two “can’t help” watching Jeremy Kyle’s confessional shows on television.

Does this stem from growing up in Tower Hamlets, one of the country’s most ethnically diverse, but poorest, boroughs in London’s East End?

“It was tough, but interesting,” he says. “It had a huge cultural and ethnic mix; everyone in our road came from a different place. There were no-go areas, but it wasn’t as tough as some might think. You just took it for granted . . . and it worked.”

The Tottenham Hotspur fan, who takes over from the current AELP chief executive Graham Hoyle next month, is from a Jewish immigrant family, “one of the last of those families living in East London”.

His grandparents moved to the capital from Poland just before the Second World War and although his grandmother spoke English, she “chose not to most of the time”.

It was Segal’s parents — his company secretary mother and cabbie father (who retrained to be a teacher) who were his inspiration.

“The war meant that my dad didn’t complete his schooling. I always knew he carried a frustration at being on the cabs,” he says.

“When he was about 45, he decided to retrain — it was a real inspiration and a big deal to all of us.”

Segal also bucked the trend when he went on to the London School of Economics, the first member of his family to go to university.

But what stands out most after spending time with him, is not just his interest in people, but his genuine desire to get youngsters on to their feet and into the world of work.

“You don’t have to meet too many young people, desperate to get an apprenticeship, to become passionate to help,” he says.

“I don’t want to be too sentimental about it because I also have a strong view about economic development and training being the key to unlocking economic development.”

Segal spent eight years at Ford (where he met his wife Pam, a fellow graduate; the couple now live in Maidenhead) before moving to Grand Metropolitan, a property conglomerate that eventually merged with Guinness to form Diagio in the 1990s. And here he moved from HR into line

management, overseeing the contracts of around 8,000 pub tenants.

His first public sector role was in 1995 when he joined Hertfordshire Training Enterprise Council (TEC) as chief executive.

“I’d been involved with the TECs at Grand Met, but I knew nothing about government, so it was a real eye-opener,” he says.

“I loved it. It was breaking ground in the way it was operating. We had fantastic support from the universities and local government, and were operating at a high level, with good people.

“I felt that I could bring a commercial-like approach to public values. I learned a lot about making that combination.”

After three or four years, he felt he was “one step too far from actually doing good stuff” and moved to become chief executive at Spring Skills, which had been one of the biggest national training providers.

But operating contracts with around 75 TECs was a struggle. “At any one time there would be something going wrong with four of more contracts...there was a lot of time spent managing contracts and not delivering to learners. It was one of the biggest frustrations I had,” explains Segal.

“I wanted to give a better service to employers and help to improve learners.”

At the same time the sector was moving to the nationalised system of the Learning Skills Council, a change that he saw through before he set up Learning Edge, a company looking at online learning and his last venture before taking his post at AELP.

What qualifies him for the new role? “I’ve been at the sharp end of trying to develop how providers make their programmes responsive to employers and making the link between government policies and delivering what employers want, which is simple, transparent, easily understood programmes that deliver to their bottom lines,” he says.

“Sometimes that doesn’t meet where a government is, but training providers have to become more skilful, especially as money shrinks and guidelines get stricter.

“You need to understand what drives the employer — providers have become slick at understanding those needs.

“We should move from a training provider base delivering programmes, to one that delivers workforce development that includes government priorities and programmes. It’s a big switch and challenge, but that’s what we have to do.”



He says the sector’s main problem is having no confidence in long-term planning.

“This is a short-term, reactive sector,” he says. “You’re only ever six months away from another big change, so no one ever puts in the planning needed — you never have any time...you just wait for the change.”

Longer contracts — up to three years — would be better, he says, adding that ministers should “understand the implications” of their changes, such as FE loans and traineeships.

“We’re not good at getting on-board with employers. Agencies forget there are 800 training providers, but they’re dealing with 100 employers each, so how do we turn those around?” adds Segal.

He says apprenticeships have “never been in a stronger place” and that there

“seems to be government support for all-age apprenticeships”.

However, many large employers are still not taking on apprentices, he thinks.

“I don’t think it’s about money, employer incentives,” he says. “They think the system is not responsive enough for them. That’s not true and we can make it more responsive.”

He believes investment will be well placed in traineeships, which are “a long time coming”, but which should have “a more flexible approach to who can deliver” and be extended to 19 to 24-year-olds.

“If we take this on board and get some employers who really want to deliver this, but aren’t in the scheme now, we will be able to show we can do it. The onus is on us,” he says.

What is it that motivates this city boy who these days enjoys nurturing an allotment, reminiscent of his grandmother who tended a tiny strip of earth in the big smoke?

“It’s people and how they work,” he says. “It’s what interested me at university and still fascinates me now. Some people think money should be used to build another road, but I think the best investment you can make is to build people’s confidence so that they take on the next development in terms of their own business careers.

“That is the best way to build the UK economy.”

Let’s get down to business

The FE sector and business are failing to lay the foundations for tomorrow’s innovative workforce, says Sandra O’Neill

Too many young people are leaving college without the knowledge, awareness and aptitude for business and entrepreneurialism that is vital to employers and to creating the future business leaders that our economy needs.

As the first cohort of students come to the end of the first year of a university education that will set them back little short of £9,000 a year, it is no surprise that applications for places have begun to dip.

Most of those who do graduate from an English university in two years’ time will have debts of £40,000 or more.

So, with larger numbers of young people than ever leaving college to take their chances in the jobs market, it becomes increasingly vital that we address the failure of a system that does not value, and fails to nurture, innovation, entrepreneurialism and employability.

“We have discovered an energy between young people — brimming with new ideas — and entrepreneurs, whose lifeblood is new ideas and innovation”

The 250,000 16 to 24-year-olds who have been out of work for a year, along with the one-in-five young people currently unemployed, are a stark reminder of the urgency of the situation.

It’s an issue in which, as a business adviser and accountant, Grant Thornton takes a keen interest.

A report we commissioned in 2010 found that the lack of collaboration between business and education is hampering the UK’s ability to compete globally when it comes to innovation and entrepreneurship.

And it’s having an equally profound and negative impact on young people’s life chances as they emerge from education ill equipped and ill-informed about business.

In Yorkshire we are piloting a scheme — Educate to Innovate — that brings colleges,



schools and businesses together with the aim of instilling in young people an interest and an enthusiasm for business that’s not being provided by the exam results-orientated curriculum of A-levels and BTec.

We have discovered a synergy and an energy between young people — full of curiosity and brimming with new ideas — and entrepreneurs, whose lifeblood is new ideas and innovation.

The Umph! business and enterprise competition we hold every summer brings 16 to 19-year-olds from across Yorkshire together with some of the region’s most inspiring entrepreneurs.

The results and feedback from the entrepreneurs, the students and their teachers are electric. Last year, students’ comments ranged from “totally awesome and inspiring” to “it gave me my first proper insight into what business is actually all about, and helped me to understand that it was something I could actually do”.

Yet despite the resoundingly positive feedback, most FE students have limited chances to meet and learn from business people.

Colleges are channelled relentlessly by results-orientated league tables and the constricting demands of academic achievement.

More enlightened colleges, or those with the resources to do so, employ a business liaison officer to create opportunities for businesses to work more closely with their college.

But such roles are few and far between, and most young people continue to leave education with little or no understanding of the skills needed for work, let alone those required to make it as an entrepreneur.

Our Educate to Innovate programme barely scratches the surface, but it does make it clear that there needs to be a change of attitude in colleges and schools across the country, with the crucial participation of business.

If we do nothing, we risk short-changing the workforce of tomorrow, and severely hampering the British economy in the process.

Sandra O’Neill, head of business development at Grant Thornton, Yorkshire

How to make your career blossom

Several past WorldSkills UK competitors were among the gold medal winners at this year’s Chelsea Flower Show, writes Joseph Massie

The Chelsea Flower Show celebrated its centenary this year, but 2013 should also be remembered for the high numbers of WorldSkills UK alumni taking part in the annual event.

I was competing for RHS Young Florist of the Year but there were five alumni competing in the florist categories alone — and three of us took home a gold medal. Keith Chapman MBE (Team UK, 2007) kept up the representation in garden design, working with landscape architect Chris Beardshaw to create the gold medal winner, The Arthritis Research UK Garden. Finally, Natalie Stanyer (Team UK, 2007) worked on Interflora’s exhibit that commemorated its 90th anniversary.

“At the end of last year, I met First Lady Michelle Obama when I was invited to dress the White House for the holiday season — something that would never have happened if I hadn’t taken part in WorldSkills”

While the representation is impressive, you simply can’t ignore the number of gold medals won by the alumni. Having competed at RHS Chelsea for the past five years, I know that winning a medal of any kind at an RHS Show is no easy feat. It takes dedication, hard work and determination, traits that are typical of a WorldSkills finalist and embedded in us as we started on our competition journey.

It is a huge honour to secure a place in the team that represents the UK at WorldSkills. We all drove ourselves to the limits of perfection in our individual skills.

A training programme for a Team UK member, who will compete internationally,



typically lasts two years, focusing on taking the young person beyond what they think they are capable of. I was coached by the top vocational teachers and trained alongside the most gifted individuals in the industry from all over the world. I know just how hard it is and that it impacts on every aspect of your life, but competing has fast-forwarded our careers and put us years ahead of our peers.

At the end of last year, I met First Lady Michelle Obama when I was invited to dress the White House for the holiday season — something that would never have happened if I hadn’t taken part in WorldSkills. Competing raised my profile in the sector and gave me the confidence to launch my own business.

Adam Smith, a team mate at WorldSkills Calgary 2009, who represented the UK in cooking and who was until recently premier sous chef at The Ritz, has said that his competition training put him five years ahead of his work peers.

The training that I got before Calgary has made me determined to stay involved with the programme. I am now responsible for helping to train future Team UK members in floristry.

I’m always impressed that whatever stage the competitor is at, he or she always has the same determination and dedication that I had and still have as I continue to compete in competitions all over the world. Working with Chloe Woolf, who will represent the UK in floristry at WorldSkills Leipzig in July, has reconfirmed how hungry the young team is for success.

The WorldSkills programme deserves much wider understanding and appreciation. Members of this year’s and future squad and teams will continue to grow and mature through the experience. You only have to look at the results table at this year’s Chelsea Show for proof.

Joseph Massie, director and proprietor, Joseph Massie Creative, squad and Team UK training team (floristry), and gold medalist, RHS Chelsea Young Florist of the Year, 2013

Bridging the skills gap through partnership

Barclays is determined that there should be more apprenticeships and that young people have the skills they need to be successful in work, writes Lynne Atkin

Figures for the early part of 2012 suggest that the number of 16 to 18-year-olds entering apprenticeships is declining compared with the same time last year.

These figures highlight the ongoing challenge that school-leavers face when they move into the world of work, particularly as apprenticeships become more popular and more competitive.

While it’s great news that apprenticeships are on the rise overall, it’s vital that employers create opportunities for younger apprentices too.

From the employer’s perspective, the message we hear over and over again is that the barrier to hiring young people directly from school is their relative lack of skills and understanding of the workplace — three-quarters of employers have told us that school-leavers’ awareness of the business world is either poor or very poor.

But beneath this figure is a strong appetite to do more to prepare young people for the workplace.

Small businesses, however, are almost

excluded from this for two reasons: the difficulty of establishing a relationship with a school and a cultural bias that stops students considering start-up and small businesses as attractive employers.

The truth is that employers can do a lot more to address the skills gap between school and work through initiatives such as offering work experience and working with training providers.

With training in essential workplace skills, and help navigating career options, school-leavers will stand a much better chance of achieving their job aspirations. Indeed, research from the Education and Employers Taskforce has found that young people who have skills training — such as CV writing or work experience — on average earn up to 18 per cent more than those without.

Barclays’ apprenticeship programme addresses the issue by including pre-apprenticeship training to ensure candidates are ready for their role from day one.

This must be followed up by on-the-job industry-specific training to prepare the recruit for a full-time job at the end of the apprenticeship.

This requires real investment, and the best way to maximise this investment is to ensure that there is a full-time job ready when the ap-

prentice has reached the required skill level.

Recognising the appetite among smaller businesses for the structures and support to offer apprenticeships, we’ve recently launched the Bridges into Work programme, which aims to support employers across a broad spectrum of industries to create 10,000 apprenticeships by 2015.

But we realise that more has to be done if 16 to 18-year-olds are going to compete with their older, more experienced, counterparts.

To help build these foundations we’ve also launched LifeSkills, a curriculum-linked programme that helps young people in school develop the skills they need to be successful in work.

We’re bringing together schools, young people and local businesses with the goal of equipping one million young people by 2015 with the skills they need to be successful in the workplace. This includes creating 50,000 work experience opportunities this year alone.

I’m delighted that companies including McDonalds, Waitrose, ISS and Centrica, are already on board as partners, and we’d like to encourage businesses of all sizes to do the same, sign up and offer work experience.

When the age of participation is raised later this year, employers will have a real



opportunity to help reduce strain on the FE system while developing their talent pools.

We recognise real change cannot be achieved by one party alone, which is why we’re committed to doing all we can and creating more ways for businesses to get involved.

Lynne Atkin, HR director, Barclays Retail and Business Bank

A qualifications body you can work with

At SQA, we think and act differently from what you may be used to. When you work with SQA, you can look forward to a level of service that helps you every step of the way. We provide the right support to make it easy for you to offer cutting-edge, internationally-recognised qualifications. Because at SQA, we believe that the most important person is you.

Why work with SQA?

SQA are experts in qualification and assessment design. For businesses, that means we can support you in delivering qualifications that build skills, enhance credibility, and count in your sector.

More than that, we are committed to working in partnership with our customers to ensure those qualifications are tailored to suit your organisation, your resources and your ambitions.

We can put unrivalled experience at your disposal to ensure that your qualifications are relevant and right for you and for your candidates, now and for the future.

All SQA Approved centres are assigned their own Business Development Manager (BDM) — one point of personal contact who’ll take time to learn about you and your business, and will support you through the entire process, even checking your forms before they are submitted.

Work with SQA and you’ll be teaming up with dedicated education professionals dedicated to your future.

At Your Service

Whether you’re seeking centre approval for the first time, or you’ve gained approval through another awarding body, SQA’s benefits and support make a positive difference.

We make a difference financially. There is just one charge for both registration and certification. There are no Annual Fees, all of our costs are upfront and there are no further charges after approval. Once you are up and running, the learning materials and assessments for a number of qualifications can be downloaded free of charge directly from our website.

SQA make sense from a practical point of view as well. Newly approved centres receive a free development visit within their first six months to help make the most of the new opportunity. We then offer a further range of procedural training opportunities, centre development visits and events for sharing best practice and receiving updates and support ensure we continue to work closely together. Once you are an approved centre, it’s easy to seek approval for further SQA qualifications.

We offer the expertise you need to make a success of your awards programme. All of our External Verifiers are subject specialists. We ensure the highest standards of quality assurance though an in-depth knowledge of your sector: If you are approved by another Ofqual — recognised awarding body to deliver the same qualifications, our Recognition process makes switching to SQA simple, straightforward and free — it’ll save you £500.



What Makes SQA Special?

SQA qualifications are designed in association with businesses and industry to recognise real world knowledge and skills, reward achievement and stand up to scrutiny. Our range of courses is growing all the time to offer awards in more and more sectors. The range includes QCF qualifications, many of which are registered on apprenticeship frameworks.

We are an Ofqual registered quality provider. We operate internationally and throughout the UK and are the national accreditation and awarding body in Scotland. Our customers include schools, colleges, universities, industry, and government.

Because we are government-owned, you can be reassured that paying shareholders is not our principal goal – any surplus generated is reinvested to continue expanding and improving our products and services. Public body status gives us security and stability — we are here for you, and we’re here to stay.

It Can Be Done with SQA. Find out more about the qualifications body that puts you first. Keep in touch at www.sqa.org.uk/qcf, at [@sqa](https://www.facebook.com/ScottishQualificationsAuthority)news and www.youtube.com/user/SQAonline. Or speak with our Business Development Team please call 0303 333 0330 or send an email to mycentre@sqa.org.uk

An investment that is well worth making

Further education for vulnerable young people pays dividends, says Billy McNally. But it's costly in a time when many local authorities want little more than the cheapest option

As a leader of a college judged outstanding by Ofsted, I was recently asked what pressures I faced from the structural changes to education and the harsh economic climate.

David Lewis College is one of 60 independent specialist colleges (ISCs) in the UK providing day and residential FE to around 3,000 students with a wide range of disabilities and challenging behaviours.

Students attend ISCs when all other options have been exhausted or shown not to be appropriate.

Our whole team — teachers, learning assistants, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, psychologists and a range of medical clinicians — are involved in planning, delivering and evaluating the impact of our students' learning.

“It is, of course, for society to decide what level of investment, if any, we are prepared to make in our most vulnerable young people's FE”

This multidisciplinary approach undoubtedly pays dividends as we manage, very successfully, our students' learning, medical conditions and complex behaviours. But it is obviously resource-intensive and comes at a cost. Most students require full-time one-to-one support from a learning assistant.

We feel it is an investment that is fair, proportionate and well worth making. It benefits not only our young people and their families but, ultimately, all of society by developing essential daily living skills and reducing lifetime NHS costs through improving the long-term prognosis of adults with complex medical needs.

How disappointing it was, then, to hear recently from one local authority commissioner that it does not want to pay for a “Rolls-Royce, when a Mini would do”.

At David Lewis we have had to manage cost carefully, having received no inflation-



ary increase in funding for many years. We believe that we offer exceptional value for money - a balance between quality and cost. But our definition of value is not one always shared by our partners. Many see only the cheapest option.

Under the guise of “austerity” are we starting to see a race to the bottom where the cheapest option for a local authority equates to the best option for a young learner?

Ultimately, is this how we want to provide further education for some of the most vulnerable young people?

The principal challenge that I face is trying to plan for the future of all our students against a background of change and what appears to be a developing reluctance by some local authorities to fund the FE of young people with a wide range of disabilities.

This creates uncertainty — for vulnerable young people and their families who have no idea whether they will be attending college in September or not, for ISC managers who do not know how many students to plan for, and for teachers and specialist support staff who do not know if they'll have a job.

The new Children and Families Bill, the devolution of funding and the potential for every local authority to set its own funding criteria and different information and data in different forms, makes things far more complicated than they need to be.

It is, of course, for society to decide what level of investment, if any, we are prepared to make in our most vulnerable young people's FE.

We then could plan in a coherent way, maximising the benefits that we can offer our vulnerable young learners and matching the available funding.

Local authorities have had at least 19 years to work with parents, to plan and decide whether a student will benefit from FE at an ISC and to budget for the costs. There should be no surprises and no uncertainty.

Billy McNally, director of education, David Lewis College, Cheshire

From Cinderella to Alice in Wonderland

Deregulation in teaching and training qualifications will introduce ‘a race to the bottom’, says Norman Crowther

Establishing and maintaining structural and cultural change in FE is a huge task, a task that needs not only vision but will — and that will is lacking. We have always had the sufficient but not the necessary conditions for success.

It is why hours of Institute for Learning professional development were never used to innovate, to develop communities of practice, to foster new relations with business and employers.

It is why the Pathfinder Projects shone like beacons and then were quenched as the funding dried up; why the ambitions of the 2001 regulations and the firmer ambitions set out in the 2007 regulations are now threatened with full revocation.

When the licence to practise was introduced (QTLS) in 2007, it established a concrete sense

“While ATL is, and will be, consistently positive in its endeavours to improve the professional lot of our members, we are not reeds in the wind”

of what ‘professionalism’ might mean. Autonomous CPD (mutually beneficial to employers, learners, staff), an entitlement to have time for that CPD, a sense that professionalism meant the upkeep of certain standards and values, and that employers had to have due regard for these professional ambitions meant a ‘professional space’ had been cleared and could be developed.

But the sector's illusory centre meant that it lacked the necessary conditions for such change.

Incorporation has constructed an image of coherence that has no accountability to anything but each corporation. This is the governance challenge to the newly established Education Training Foundation (aka FE Guild).

The critical juncture teaching staff face is deregulation of the 2007 Workforce Regulations, ironically given in the Learning and Skills Improvement Service guidance on the new qualifications (an admirable example of



how we have moved from Cinderella to Alice in Wonderland).

While ATL is, and will be, consistently positive in its endeavours to improve the professional lot of our members, we are not reeds in the wind. We need to ask at this juncture: whither professionalism?

Can professionalism in FE survive increasingly fragmenting employers' and private interests in the governance of the sector; and in the post-19 funding changes?

Is not the fitness of qualifications, teacher standards, curriculum design, pedagogy, research, the preserve of a particular group of professionals: lecturers? Just as accounts, marketing, income generation, premises and HR belong to another occupational sphere: business leadership?

Is there not sense in seeking the support and expertise of teacher trainers in universities, researchers and experts in education and skills policy to help our policy formation?

What we are shaping in post-16 education is what Ken Spours of the Institute of Education describes as an ‘outlier’ status. Not European, not Scandinavian, not American, certainly not Welsh or Scottish.

In fact, some argue we are not even on the map: we don't have a coherent sector at all from a European perspective. (Test: try to define the post-16 sector to somebody who does not know it.)

Deregulation will introduce a race to the bottom, and further hinder our ability to engage with other labour markets and manufacturing standards. So, no matter how well meaning some college principals are, they are in a sector that has been for too long shaped by following funding and, for the past 20 years, constructing a perverse corporate ethos. Policy design and execution have never been properly coupled together.

This has now reached an overly critical point with an employer-led sector body (ETF) affirming government ideology to deregulate.

And in September, we return to the years before 2001 when evidence and argument were building up that we needed standards and initial teacher training for FE staff... but that's yet another story.

So it's ‘back to the future’. We have to solve the same problem again, but in a different way.

Norman Crowther, national official for post-16 education at the Association of Teachers and Lecturers

Cultivating a change in careers provision

Millions of people today work in jobs that didn't exist when their parents left education. It's a new world that demands more coherent national and local careers provision, says Deirdre Hughes

We are facing a significant economic challenge; there is high unemployment (especially among young people) at the same time as employers struggle to recruit people with the skills they need. As careers diversify, this topic becomes more important and more challenging.

More complex careers, with more options in work and learning, are opening up new opportunities for many people. But they are also making career choices harder for young people and adults; make the wrong one and there are financial and emotional penalties.

About 1.09 million young people are not in education, employment and/or training (NEET), yet at the same time, according to the Confederation of British Industry, more than half of businesses are not confident that they will find sufficient recruits.

This is particularly acute in certain sectors that are vital to the growth of our economy; for example, 23 per cent of businesses face difficulty in getting experienced staff with expertise in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. As recent studies have shown, there is a mismatch between the career aspirations of young people and the

reality of the jobs market.

We also have an ageing population with many adults having to work longer. Therefore, it is vital that we create more insights to job opportunities and areas for the development and growth of vocational skills. Something needs to be done — and quickly.

“The days when a careers adviser could guide a young person or adult into a job or occupation for life are long gone”

In this new world, people need access to reliable and relevant information about a jobs market that is undergoing rapid, dynamic change. They need, too, to be prepared by their schools, colleges and universities to be resilient to the uncertainties and opportunities of the flexible labour market. From the start, they need to understand and think through the options open to them in terms of their future careers. And they will need to

repeat that process throughout their working lives.

The days when a careers adviser could guide a young person or adult into a job or occupation for life are long gone. The role has changed, as has the landscape of careers services. As well as public sector careers services, there are now private-sector consultants, employers, recruitment companies and learning providers, all contributing to a richly varied career development landscape.

Rapid technological developments — notably online provision — mean that our population needs career management and digital literacy skills to achieve sustained employability. There are real risks of social exclusion, particularly for young people and older adults unable to afford technology or with limited access to it. Life skills now include new ways of thinking about careers and the dynamic context in which they evolve. And the pace of change can only increase.

The National Careers Council challenges the government, employers, education and the careers sector to act boldly and decisively in framing a more coherent national and local careers offer for young people and adults. We need new ideas and approaches; we need high-performing career development and labour market policies and practices, involving the public, private and voluntary/community sectors.

A council report sets out seven recommen-



dations that together would raise standards right across career support services. Based on a greatly strengthened partnership approach, they would help to shape a highly visible careers service to meet the needs of an aspirational nation. If the government acts on them, together we can create a movement to bring about a much needed culture change in careers provision for young people and adults.

Dr Deirdre Hughes OBE, chair National Careers Council

Employability lessons for traineeships

An OCR pilot in Kent is offering a group of 16 to 19-year-olds the same three-pronged approach as the government's traineeships, writes Mark Dawe

About 958,000 (about 20 per cent) of 16 to 24-year-olds in the UK were out of work in the first quarter of 2013. While this is lower than in some EU countries, helping young people to take their first steps into the workplace is important for any economy and a responsibility for us all, including awarding bodies.

After nearly a year of discussion about a ‘pre-apprenticeship’ initiative to help young people bridge the gap between school or college and the workplace, Skills Minister Matthew Hancock published the framework for traineeships in May.

They start for 16 to 19-year-olds this September, with the possibility of an extension to 24-year-olds “in due course”. They will be structured around three core areas: work placements, work preparation training, and a focus on improving English and maths skills.

The employability skills qualifications that OCR provides, with functional skills and Cambridge progression qualifications in English and maths that feed into them, are all relevant to the new traineeships.

OCR will offer a ‘Cambridge traineeship’ package of qualifications and support for

those who want the convenience of a one-shop.

We are currently running a pilot with the Kent Association of Training Organisations (KATO) in Thanet and Gravesend, two areas of relatively high unemployment. The 35 young people recruited for the three-month pilot are being offered the same three-pronged approach: work experience, a focus on core English and maths skills (we have a diagnostic assessment tool to identify individual learner needs in this area), as well as work preparation (vocational skills courses and interview practice).

The pilot focuses on preparing young people to work in customer service and business administration in particular, with work experience in local employers, such as solicitors, retailers and GP surgeries.

By partnering with an organisation such as KATO, feedback from real training providers and learners can inform our planning. The pilot, although not identical, closely mirrors the traineeship programmes outlined by the government. If this shows that the programme works for 16 to 19-year-olds, it is more likely that the government will find a way to extend the initiative.

Those with other Skills Funding Agency and employability funding may be able to utilise various qualifications and/or units available within traineeships for those over 19, as many are already doing.

However traineeships are taken up from August, there is already an enormous amount of expertise in the work-based learning sector in ‘employability’ — the general skills and abilities that people need to get, keep and do well in any job. They are the skills that organisations, such as the Confederation of British Industry, say is lacking in many young people.

“However traineeships are taken up from September, there is already an enormous amount of expertise in the work-based learning sector in ‘employability’”

Demand for OCR's employability skills qualifications has certainly grown in recent years and we are updating our qualifications



to take account of new technologies and developments in the world of work.

With changes in funding, new targets, and uncertainty over contracts, these are challenging times for the work-based learning sector. OCR is keen to make its contribution and looks forward to providing an update on the impact of the Kent pilot.

Mark Dawe, chief executive of OCR

VQ Day celebrations kick off with awards

VQ Day celebrations kicked off with a ceremony and reception in the Houses of Parliament to recognise the achievements of vocational learners from across the UK.

Lord Kenneth Baker, chair of the Edge Foundation, and Skills Minister Matthew Hancock presented a range of regional awards, as well as Learner of the Year and, for the first time, Employer of the Year.

Lord Baker said: “We’ve got to elevate the whole concept of vocational and technical education in this country; we need it desperately.”

Mr Hancock agreed. “Millions of people achieve vocational qualifications throughout the year. Today is the day that we can celebrate that,” he said.

Aaron Freeman, 24, from Gloucestershire, won the learner award. He came back into education at 19 to do a public services diploma before going on to a degree in criminology and psychology. He now runs his own business.

He impressed the judges with his commitment to his studies and his dedication to “providing invaluable work experience to former peers”.

He said: “To have this recognition makes me really, really proud. I’m really into promoting vocational qualifications — I think they have a bit of a bad name and that’s wrong.”

The Veolia Group won the employer award.



Mark Harper MP, Aaron Freeman, National VQ Learner of the Year, and Skills Minister Matthew Hancock

VQDay

Celebrating Vocational Achievement

A national celebration of vocational qualifications, for students, teachers and employers

Shadow ministers visit college



Students with Shadow Ministers Stephen Twigg, centre, and Tristram Hunt, far right, as part of a group discussion

Shadow Education Secretary Stephen Twigg visited a London college as part of VQ Day celebrations to chat with students about their career hopes.

He was joined by Shadow Education Minister Tris-

tram Hunt at Lambeth College’s Clapham Centre where a ‘high street learning environment’ is due to open in September, featuring a hairdressing salon, beauty spa, restaurant, gym and shops.

The college, which brands itself as the Careers College, is also developing a Skills Exchange, where learners can register their interest in, and availability for, part time work, volunteering, apprenticeships and project work with employers as well as permanent work.

Principal Mark Silverman said: “The major new developments at our Clapham centre will enable us to develop strong partnerships with schools and employers.

“They ensure that our curriculum is fit for purpose and reflect skills gaps and future job prospects within Lambeth and South London.

“Our vision is one where learners can put their skills into practice, get ready for the world of work and obtain real work experience to put on their CVs.

“I’m delighted that as part of VQ day I can share with the Shadow Ministers how we anticipate repositioning ourselves to become a truly vocational college which will help our learners become the employees or entrepreneurs of the future.”

VQ Day celebrates vocational qualifications that give students a foot in the door to the industry they want to work in, or prepare them for vocational study or university.

Roaring success at the Lion Awards

The achievements of more than 100 learners and tutors were recognised at a glamorous and glitzy ceremony last Wednesday evening at the Roundhouse in North London’s Camden.

In its eleventh year, the Lion Awards, organised by City & Guilds, are the finale for the organisation’s medals for excellence programme.

All this year’s winners were invited to attend last week’s spectacular ceremony, hosted by pianist and singer Mylene Klass, who played for the audience as things got underway.

Nominees and guests were treated to a red carpet reception, three-course dinner and, in addition to Ms Klass, entertainment from BRIT school pupils.

Nominees are selected through a points system, following the achievement of a medal for excellence. All are judged by City & Guilds’ representatives



Learners and tutors line up with the evening’s host, Mylene Klass, red dress, far left

against a separate set of criteria for each category, with the exception of the People’s Choice Award.

More than 39,000 people voted in this year’s people’s award, won by George Wingfield (pictured third from left). With almost 50 years in the plumbing industry — he was named “Britain’s favourite plumber” in 1992. He was recognised for his teaching at West Cheshire College.

Judges also chose a “winner of winners” from the evening’s line-up. Helen Wynne, of Deeside College, who won the Small Business Learner of the Year Award also won the overall Outstanding Achiever Award.

Helen Wynne was recognised for her determination to set up Blyths Child-minding, which specialises in caring for children with disabilities and additional needs, after her son was born with a rare disability and she could not find appropriate childcare provision for him.

Respects were also paid to the late Mary O’Boyle, the Innovator of the Year, who was recognised for engaging learners failed by education. Many said they couldn’t have completed a qualification without her guidance. O’Boyle died after a long illness a few weeks ago, but her brothers were at the ceremony to collect her award.

River view for apprentices



Apprentices on the terraces of the Cholmondeley Room at the House of Lords, overlooking the River Thames in Westminster

The successes of some of the highest achieving apprentices from West Nottinghamshire College were celebrated at the House of Lords last Wednesday.

Apprentices, employers, parents and guests packed the opulent Cholmondeley Room for a lunchtime reception hosted by Baroness Prashar.

The event was an opportunity to formally recognise the positive outcome that apprenticeships generated for both learners and their employers. Twenty-five of the college’s 12,000 apprentices were formally congratulated and awarded for their achievements.

The college’s principal and chief executive, Asha Khemka, OBE, said: “It is a tremendous privilege to be here, in such beautiful and historic settings. Celebrations of this kind are the highlight of my role . . . If I had my way, I would have all 12,000 apprentices with us today.”

Skills Minister Matthew Hancock said: “Today is a great opportunity to celebrate the high-achieving apprentices, the small and large employers that play a vital role in the delivery of apprentices and more generally the apprenticeships programme.”

The apprentices at the reception came from West Nottinghamshire College and its subsidiaries, Vision Apprentices and Vision Workforce Skills.

Focus on traineeships as clock ticks down to scheme launch

Rebecca Cooney
@RebeccaKCooney

The long-awaited traineeship scheme was in the spotlight at an Association of Colleges conference in Central London last Tuesday.

More than 60 delegates from across the country asked questions about and discussed the programme, which will be available from September for 16 to 19-year-olds.

Traineeships will prepare young people for work or an apprenticeship through offering unpaid work experience placements, as well as employability skills training and basic maths and English.

Eoin Parker, the deputy director for pre-employment and basic skills at the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, said the traineeships, first announced by Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg in July last year, developed after employers voiced concerns that many young people lacked the skills and experience to compete for work or apprenticeships.

There was, Mr Parker said, “a real need for something that was a pre-apprenticeship step, which doesn’t really exist at the moment”.

He said many of the 450 responses to the discussion paper on the scheme, launched in January, supported the government’s emphasis on providers having discretion to determine the exact content of their traineeships.

“The feeling was that individuals differ, localities differ, the needs of a business may differ and we really wanted this to be flexible for providers on the ground,” he said.

“There was a strong consensus around the importance of the work experience element that reinforced our thinking, and on the importance of collaboration between employers and training providers.”

When questioned about the decision to limit traineeships to 16 to 19-year-olds, he said that age group had been prioritised so that the scheme was available for the coming academic year.

He said that the intention was to expand it to 19 to 24-year-olds. “I can’t confirm the precise timescale at the moment but we’re working to make this happen,” said Mr Parker.

The Skills Funding Agency head of funding for pre-employment Sara Tulk acknowledged that the timeframe had been very short.

She said: “It’s very unusual to have a policy move to implementation so quickly. To say that lots has been going on behind the scenes to get us to this point is a slight understatement.”

The Education Funding Agency’s head of funding development, Kevin Street, agreed that traineeships would allow for a degree of flexibility.

“A large proportion of this development now really is up to you, and the partnership between yourselves, employers, Job Centre plus and the young people to design the programmes in the way that you see fit,” he told delegates. “Therefore the rules are deliberately vague.



Members of the panel, Sue Clarke, Kevin Street, Eoin Parker and chair Teresa Frith

“In the words of Alison Wolf, ‘only ask for what you definitely need’, the rest is up to you to decide when you’re designing your programme.”

“We are looking for a quality start, this is a deliberate decision by [Skills Minister Matthew Hancock] to start with a quality group of providers”

He added: “The more guidance you get from us, the more questions it generates, the more restricted you feel when delivering your programme.”

Only providers with an Ofsted grade one or two can offer traineeships, along with some subcontractors.

Mr Street said: “We are looking for a quality start, this is a deliberate decision by [Skills Minister Matthew Hancock] to start — I won’t use the word small — but with a quality group of providers.

“He is concerned that the traineeship brand, and there will be a brand in due course, is a respected one.

“Why use Ofsted grades? We all understand



Kevin Street, head of funding and development, EFA



Eoin Parker, deputy director at BIS

they’re not perfect, they don’t say whether or not you will deliver a good traineeship, but what they do is give us a good impression of an overall well-managed operation.

“The long-term plan is to have a suite of robust destination measures to monitor traineeships.”

One of the biggest questions has been whether trainees will be able to claim jobseeker’s allowance; critics say there would be little incentive to enrol if trainees lost financially.

Jim Patrick from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) confirmed that the rule requiring claimants to do less than 16 hours of training a week would be enforced at present, but that it would not apply under the government’s new universal credit.

He said that DWP representatives were talking with the Treasury to try to relax the 16-hour rule for those who needed basic skills training.

“We’ll just have to continue to work with and be supported by those colleagues in this because we both believe it’s the right thing to do,” he said.



Paul Oginsky, Youth policy advisor to the Prime Minister, David Cameron



Sue Clarke, EFA

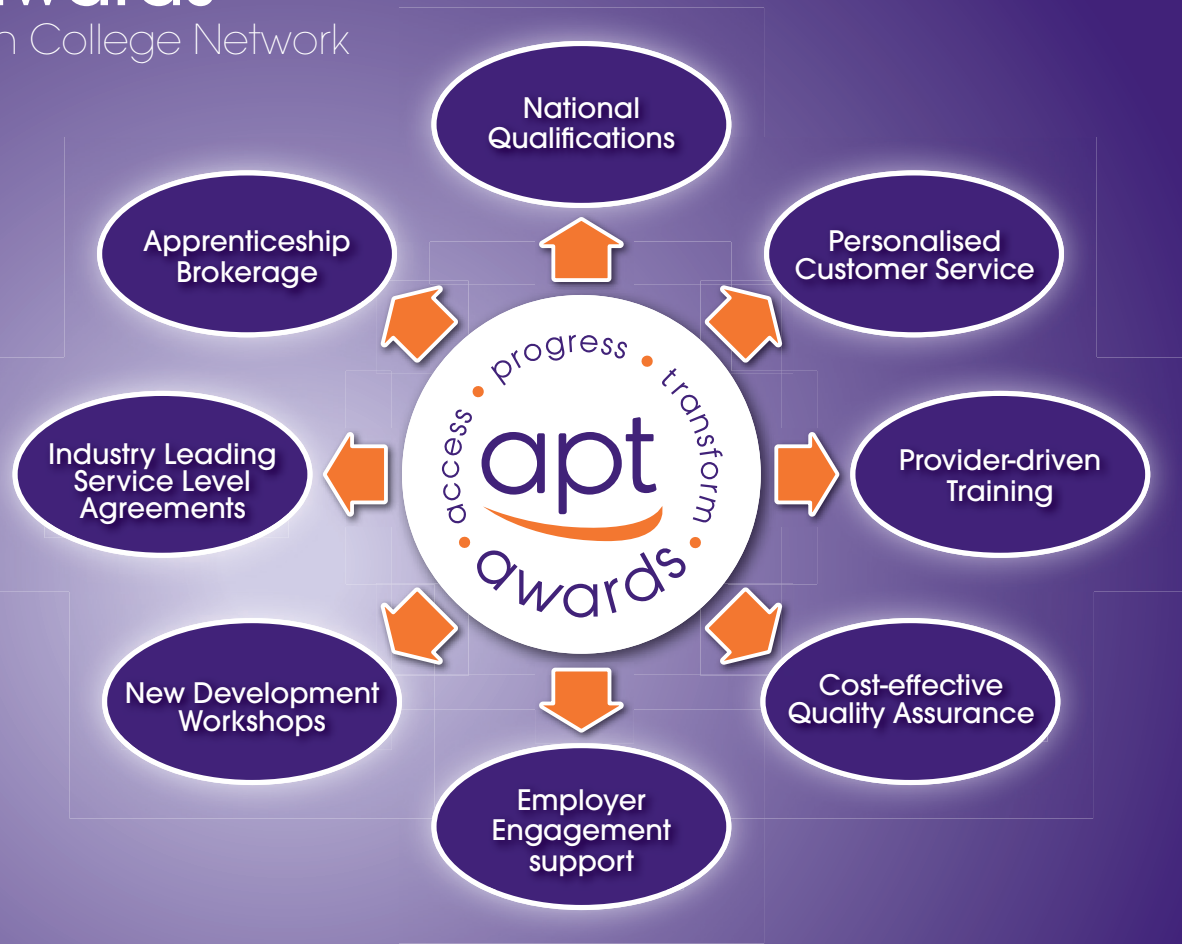
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the new trading name for Open College Network South West Region (OCNSWR)

Apt awards is an independent national Awarding Organisation, regulated by Ofqual to develop and offer national qualifications on the Qualifications and Credit Framework, and licensed by the QAA to award the Access to Higher Education Diploma.

Apt awards works with a wide range of national and local organisations, including FE colleges, adult and community education centres, schools, and employers.

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FE Week campus round-up

The right ingredients for a job



Nelson and Colne College student Jonathan Nadin, who is looking forward to starting work at Rudding Park

Catering and hospitality student has proved that he can stand the heat in the kitchen by landing his dream job at one of the UK's top hotels.

Nelson and Colne College student Jonathan Nadin, 19, will join the kitchen at Rudding Park in Harrogate, which was voted best hotel in the UK at the TripAdvisor Traveller's Choice Awards 2013.

"I am really looking forward to starting," said Jonathan. "I'd like thank all the tutors for pushing me in the right direction and particularly Nick Hatch for taking the time to help me get through the level three course."

Jonathan was given an interview for the job when he took his CV with him on a college tour of the restaurant.

Hold the front page in Hertfordshire



Students who took over the Comet newspaper, with their front page

Twelve students from North Hertfordshire College took over their local newspaper, The Comet, and its website for a week.

They took over roles in journalism, photography, design, digital and social media, as part of 'The Big Student Takeover'.

They won the chance to get involved by designing digital adverts for the college's open day.

Melissa Agard, 17, editor for the week, said: "It's amazing what we've done in just one week. We had our occasional fights and we handled it like adults, which I really loved."

Melissa's hard work has earned her an internship at the paper.

"I've wanted to be a journalist since I was little, I would write crazy stories and show my mum and she always said I'd be successful. Now I believe her," she said.

Want your college or training provider to appear on these pages?

Send your stories with pictures to news@feweek.co.uk including names, ages and course of students where applicable



From left: Stapeley Broad Lane Primary School pupils James Morgan-Wynne, Ollie Torjussen and Alfie Johnson, all nine, at the tag rugby festival

Tag rugby day showcases sport

Sports students in Cheshire helped primary school children from 10 schools tackle rugby at a tag rugby festival.

Learners at South Cheshire College worked with professional rugby coaches while helping to run and officiate at the day designed to introduce children to the sport.

Graham Coffey, head of sport at the college, said: "This was a great event for our students to get involved with."

The event was organised by Crewe and Nantwich School Sports Partnership (CNSSP), the Rugby Football Union and Crewe and Nantwich RUFC.



From left: Anna Murphy, Arit Anderson, and Sarah Jarman

Chelsea medal for Capel Manor

Talent bloomed for a Middlesex college at this year's Chelsea Flower Show.

The Capel Manor exhibit, designed by lecturers and put together by students, celebrated the annual show's centenary by telling the story of the development of the college and its contribution to horticultural education. It earned a silver medal.

Senior gardener Julie Phipps said: "The exhibit... was at times challenging and tiring, but the team worked very well together and we were all pleased at the overall result."

Level two garden design students Arit Anderson, 44, Sarah Jarman, and Anna Murphy, both 42, won first prize for their display in the fresh talent competition.

They were challenged to use flowers to decorate a sculpture that acts as a landmark to help visitors navigate the show, and created a design that highlighted the plight of native birds.

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Who cares, wins

Thomas Bampfield wasn't fazed when actors took the part of patients in a WorldSkills caring competition in the West Midlands, going on to win the regional heat. Rebecca Cooney reports

A West Midlands student who wants to study paramedic science has won the regional heat of the WorldSkills UK 2013 caring competition.

Thomas Bampfield, 17, who is studying a level three diploma in health and social care at Walsall College and volunteers with St John Ambulance, wowed a panel of expert judges to clinch top place.

He said: "I always looked after my nan when I was younger."

"I'd go over and make her drinks and do the gardening for her; things that she couldn't do."

In the first round of the West Midlands heat, held at South and City College Birmingham, Thomas had to get an actor playing an elderly person with dementia out of bed, washed, dressed and ready for daycare.

"It was a strange experience, because they were very, very good actors," he said.

"You wouldn't have thought they'd be able to perform the role as well as they did, but it just felt like real life. I tried not to look at the judges and acted as though the person was my nan."

For the second round, Thomas was challenged with designing a week's diet for a young adult with learning difficulties.

"I've got a student placement at a special needs school, so I deal with people with learning difficulties and disabilities regularly. I didn't feel uncomfortable or out of place."

"I mentioned to one of the teaching assistants that I was doing the competition, and she sat me down and said 'these are the different things you could come across' — the staff really helped and that was all in their own time."

"In the future I'd like to finish my course and hopefully go to university to do paramedic science. It's something that I've always been interested in — being in St John Ambulance is a big hobby. I think going into that profession would really suit me."

The WorldSkills caring competition aims to find the best young social care workers for adults.

Regional heats will continue until July, with the highest scorers going forward to the national finals at the Birmingham NEC this November.

The world finals will be held in Brazil next year.



Thomas Bampfield with his certificate

Walsall College's health and social care curriculum manager Surjit Jakhu said: "This competition gave Tom the opportunity to showcase his range of skills . . . and he did an excellent job, earning a very high score."

"He is a great role model to other male students looking to study health and social care."

"We are confident he'll progress to the national final and believe he has a very good chance of going to Brazil."

Presenting the awards, lead judge Jennifer Bernard said: "WorldSkills just gets better and better as a competition and a showcase for how well social care is carried out."

"It was a pleasure to observe such committed competitors taking part in this heat and to award prizes to some outstanding care workers and students."

Buxton student's fluttering success

A n up and coming hair stylist dazzled a panel of judges when she took three titles at her college's annual hair and beauty showcase.

Buxton College student Carly Motley, 32, created a 'butterflies in the wind' look to take the prizes for best avant-garde style, best photographic style, and best level three hairdresser.

"I've been planning and working hard to perfect my 'avant-garde' look for 12 months," she said.

"It feels fantastic to win this prize, but to take home the other titles as well is just amazing."

Carly dip-dyed and curled hair extensions, and made butterflies from fabric, glitter and hair for the look that won £125, donated by City & Guilds.



Carly Motley with her model

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ABC AWARDS

FE Week campus round-up



Dominic Grieve, right, with student president Alex Ruskin and principal Campbell Christie

Attorney General’s life in politics

The Attorney General recently outlined his role and responsibilities to a group of Berkshire students.

Dominic Grieve also answered questions from Bracknell & Wokingham College A-level politics, law and sociology students on same-sex marriage, Scottish independence and recent events in Woolwich.

Student union president Alex Ruskin, 19, said: “Today was a great opportunity to meet a

member of Parliament, to get their thoughts on different upcoming or on-going issues, and to gain a wider understanding of the role of the Attorney General.”

College principal and chief executive Campbell Christie said the students were “appreciative” of the chance to look into an area of politics that was rarely discussed and that added to their understanding of the legal system.

Football match raises cash for charity



ICT students staged a charity football match to raise money and awareness for a Cystic Fibrosis charity

Deerne Valley College ICT and computing students raised £70 for the Cystic Fibrosis Trust when they heard that their tutor’s grandson had the life-limiting condition.

Tutor Tony Sables said that the cash would go towards essential research.

The Cystic Fibrosis Trust provides support

for those living with the condition, which affects the lungs, and their families, as well as fundraising for clinical research.

Tony’s son will also be skydiving in the coming months as part of the family’s fundraising efforts. Donations can be made at www.justgiving.com/leospage.

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Jobs

Sir David presents film award



Abbie Barnes with Sir David Attenborough

A budding wildlife film-maker’s success in a national competition was rewarded with an award presented by the veteran broadcaster Sir David Attenborough.

Abbie Barnes, 16, who studies environmental science, archaeology, biology and geography at Richard Huish College in Taunton, created a film, Save our oceans, recycle your plastic, for the EcoTales competition.

She said that she had a chance to chat with Sir David at the end of the awards ceremony: “It

really was an amazing day — I’m still buzzing,” she said.

To make her film, Abbie enlisted volunteers to clean up Lilstock beach near Minehead.

One of the judges, BBC wildlife presenter Michaela Strachan, said: “Abbie has done a fab job... the film is really nicely edited and she has used a great variety of shots to illustrate her points.

“I almost thought I was watching a Countryfile piece. Sign her up.”

Marc nets award for second time

A Newcastle basketball teacher has been named Coach of the Year by England Basketball for the second year running.

Marc Steutel, head basketball development coach for North East Sports Academy at TyneMet College, won last year for his work in England Basketball division two, but this is his first award in division one.

“Receiving this award is nice on a personal level, but it is more of recognition of the positive strides that the players I coach have made,” he said.

“I feel as though the success this season has brought has made me a better coach, which will benefit the students and athletes I work with at TyneMet College and Queen Alexandra Sixth Form.”



Marc Steutel in action

WE’RE HIRING

Dv8 training is a well-established and expanding training provider rated **“good with outstanding features”** by Ofsted. We have over 300 young people going through our vocational programmes per year and they all take qualifications in maths, English and ICT. We are looking for people to join our dedicated functional skills team based in Walthamstow, East London. The Dv8 model of functional skills delivery has been recognised by Ofsted as an example of national best practice. Dv8 training is an equal opportunities employer and we are committed to safeguarding all learners enrolled on our programmes.

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Functional skills support tutor
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£35,000 - £40,000

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Job Description and Person Specification are available on the College website: www.bowlingcollege.co.uk

Closing Date: 24th June 2013

Applicants should return a CV for the attention of the board of directors to enquiries@bowlingcollege.co.uk

To advertise with us call Hannah Smith on 020 81234 778

FIFE COLLEGE

CREATE THE FUTURE

Fife College will be fully established on 1 August 2013. Defined by its location in Fife, and building on the success of the previous colleges, the new college will sustain a national & international reputation.

The new Vice Principal roles are pivotal. They have responsibility for keynote functional areas &, along with the new Principal, Hugh Logan, will form the new Executive Team. The roles offer immense professional satisfaction & we expect that the individuals appointed, already leaders in their fields, are motivated by the prospect of future career progression.

Vice Principal Curriculum

Salary **c.£90k**

You will have an exceptional understanding of the dynamics of curriculum, standing out as a leader in the field. The ability to understand how excellence is sustained will be built on an appreciation of the importance of information systems. You will relate to all staff involved in curriculum delivery with an understanding of quality enhancement & issues involved in curriculum shift. Awareness of curriculum delivery & anticipation of change will require you to build strong relationships with all divisions of the college.

Vice Principal Finance & Planning

Salary **c.£80k**

You will provide strategic & operational advice to the college on its financial performance, based on sophisticated & reliable data. Possessing an appropriate professional qualification, you will advise the Board & all relevant budget-holders. Highly systems literate, you will interpret the implications of external policy shifts, have an important relationship with funding bodies & acute awareness of commercial income streams. The development of a high performing finance team will be vital. The person appointed will have responsibility also for producing & up-dating the college’s estates strategy.

Vice Principal Organisational Change & Development

Salary **c.£80k**

You will play a leading role initially in the formation of the new college, ensuring synergy & effectiveness of infrastructure, systems & facilities. At this time of critical change & organisational development, you will be a catalyst in the development of a new college culture & identity. You will have proven communication skills, and will reach out to all internal stakeholders, putting robust strategies, processes & structures in place. The role will involve leadership of functional areas (initially ICT, Estates, HR) to ensure that the college makes best use of its resources and that its resource base is capable of supporting the highest levels of performance.

Vice Principal Commercial Development

Salary **c.£80k**

You will have an impressive track-record of sustainable income generation & will build on considerable success to date. We expect you to inculcate a culture of commercial awareness throughout the college to establish dependable income streams with scope for growth. We require you to alert the college to market opportunities & to develop significant bi-lateral relationships with major businesses.

A candidate pack for each post, including relevant documentation & details of how to apply, can be obtained through the link: www.edenscott.com/fifecollege / closing date for applications is 12 noon on 17 June 2013. Precise final interview dates are in the candidate pack.

The college is being assisted in this recruitment process by **edenscott**. Interested candidates are invited to have an informal discussion with:

Alan Walter Head of Executive Search
0131 550 1148 / 07584 676 007 / alan.walter@edenscott.com

Bill Wardle Principal Consultant
0131 550 1112 / 07777642100 / william.wardle@edenscott.com



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With a strong customer focus, you'll have previously developed and maintained positive and productive customer

relationships. Confidence and personality are important and you must be target driven with the desire to create opportunities and maximise growth.

Closing date: 1700 on Wednesday 19 June 2013

Interviews: Wednesday 26 June 2013 at Robins Wood House, Robins Wood Road, Aspley, Nottingham, NG8 3NH.

For further details please visit www.emfec.co.uk or www.abcawards.co.uk or contact Tracy Roser on 0115 8541628 or tracyr@emfec.co.uk

We do not accept CVs or late applications. No agencies please.

Do you want to be the next inspiring leader of Cornwall College?

Chief Executive Officer and Principal

Cornwall College is one of the largest further and higher education colleges in the UK and plays a pivotal role in the social and economic development of the county.

We are looking for an exceptional individual with a proven track record of transformational and entrepreneurial leadership in a senior role. You must have a passion for excellence in learning and teaching with the desire and ability to improve quality and inclusivity. You will have an impressive history of building sustainable partnerships and delivering commercial success.

You should be an outstanding inspirational leader who can provide strategic direction to achieve excellence. Set in one of the most beautiful parts of the country, this is a rare opportunity to become a key player in one of the largest, most diverse and forward thinking colleges in the country.

Salary: will be commensurate with the skills and experience of the successful candidate.

For an information pack and application form please email clerk@cornwall.ac.uk. For an informal discussion please call Steve Burgess, Human Resources Director on 07767 870 438 or Debbie Wilshire, Deputy Chief Executive on 07768 468 839.

Closing Date: 12 noon, Friday 28th June 2013



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Selection dates: 24 and 25 June 2013



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FE Week Sudoku challenge

			9				5	
		4						6
		2	5					8
	3	5		1				
8	7			6			2	5
				7		8	1	
5					2	9		
3						6		
	6				8			

Difficulty:
EASY

How to play: Fill in all blank squares making sure that each row, column and 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9

Solutions: Next week

				1				
2			3					
	3	1			5			8
		4	1					5
	6	8	7		2	3	4	
5					8	1		
9			2			7	3	
					1			4
				3				

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Last Week’s solutions

9	3	5	8	7	1	6	2	4
6	7	4	2	9	3	5	1	8
1	2	8	5	4	6	7	9	3
4	1	2	3	6	9	8	5	7
7	6	3	1	5	8	9	4	2
8	5	9	4	2	7	1	3	6
3	8	7	9	1	2	4	6	5
2	4	1	6	8	5	3	7	9
5	9	6	7	3	4	2	8	1

Difficulty:
EASY

9	8	7	5	4	1	2	3	6
4	3	5	7	6	2	1	9	8
6	1	2	3	9	8	5	7	4
7	2	3	6	1	4	8	5	9
5	6	4	9	8	7	3	2	1
1	9	8	2	5	3	6	4	7
3	4	9	1	2	6	7	8	5
8	7	6	4	3	5	9	1	2
2	5	1	8	7	9	4	6	3

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

FE Week mini-mascot

Follow the adventures of *FE Week’s* biggest and smallest fan!



“Mostly this week I’ve been having morning cuddles”

You can also follow our *FE Week* mini-mascot on Twitter @daniellinford